

MARVEL
COMICS

THE GATHERING OF FIVE
PART TWO

THE AMAZING

SPIDER-MAN

OCT
#440

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE RETURN OF THE
MOLTEN MAN!



WWW.MARVEL.COM

DIRECT EDITION



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BYRNE

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LAROSA

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A HOTTIME IN THE OLDTOWN

IT BEGAN LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO, AS PETER PARKER WOKE TO THE SOUND OF HIS BEDROOM CLOCK RADIO, AND A NEWS REPORT THAT CHILLED HIS BLOOD.

NOW HE LOOKS DOWN ON A TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION THAT DRAWS A DEAD STRAIGHT LINE ACROSS THE FACE OF MANHATTAN.

IT'S TRUE! THE NEWS REPORTS WERE RIGHT!

AND IN THE FORTY-FIVE MINUTES SINCE I HEARD THE FIRST OF THEM, HE'S TRAVELED A MILE OR MORE FROM WHERE HE STARTED!

THE GATHERING OF FIVE (PART TWO)

JOHN BYRNE
GUEST WRITER

INKS LAROSA & RAMOS & PALMIOTTI & KAYANAN

PENCILER RAFAEL KAYANAN

RS & COMICRAFT'S LIZ AGRAPHIOTTIS LETTERS

ROCKWITZ & BERNARDO COLORS

EDITOR RALPH MACCHIO

BOB HARRAS EDITOR IN CHIEF

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

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HEY, IT'S
THE EVER-
AMAZING

SPIDER-MAN!



Meet Peter Parker, once a brilliant, though meek, high school student, orphaned as a child and reared by his doting Uncle Ben and Aunt May. At a science fair, Peter was bitten by an irradiated spider and gained the proportionate strength, speed, agility and early warning "spider-sense" of that arachnid. He used these powers for personal fame and fortune as a masked Spider-Man. But when Peter failed to stop a criminal who later killed his beloved Uncle Ben, the youth's costumed identity took on a far deeper significance. He realized that with great power there must also come great responsibility. So Peter Parker became the wall-crawling nemesis of the criminal element; a young man determined to atone for the tragic death of his uncle — The Amazing Spider-Man!

A true hero at heart, Spider-Man has dedicated his life to preventing injustices against the innocent.

MOLTEN MAN

Mark Raxton argued with the inventor he was assisting, Spencer Smythe, and struck him because Raxton wanted to sell his share of the project to the highest bidder. The project involved a liquid metal alloy which was derived from a meteor containing organic material. A sample of the liquid fell on Raxton during the argument and was absorbed by his skin giving him a yellowish metallic appearance as well as superhuman strength and heat-radiating powers. Raxton dubbed himself the Molten Man and went on a crime spree until being defeated by Spider-Man numerous times. Recently, Raxton reformed and was hired by a subsidiary of Osborn Industries, the Multivex Corporation. His stepsister is Liz Allan Osborn.



NORMAN OSBORN

The wealthy industrialist who pursued a life of crime as the costumed *Green Goblin*. Years ago, the Goblin was presumed killed in a battle with Spider-Man that also took the life of Peter Parker's girlfriend, *Gwen Stacy*. But recently Osborn resurfaced, having spent years running a criminal empire in Europe where he fled. Having come back to America, Osborn is determined to once again bring horror into the lives of Peter Parker and those he loves.



SCRIERS

Part of a deity-worshipping criminal cult located in Europe that Norman Osborn became a member of several years back. They wear hooded cloaks and appear to be supernatural in nature, though they are not. Scriers often perform whatever mission Osborn assigns them, usually surveillance.



JOE "ROBBIE" ROBERTSON

A man of great journalistic integrity, he is the conscience of the *Daily Bugle* newspaper. Robbie began his career there as the paper's city editor, and has risen to become its editor in chief. He is a friend and confidant of Peter Parker.



ALISON MONGRAIN

A woman in the employ of Norman Osborn, the *Green Goblin*, who recently aided him in his long-planned revenge on Peter Parker.



PREVIOUSLY IN



The webslinger rescued a young girl who was lost in the city's sewers.



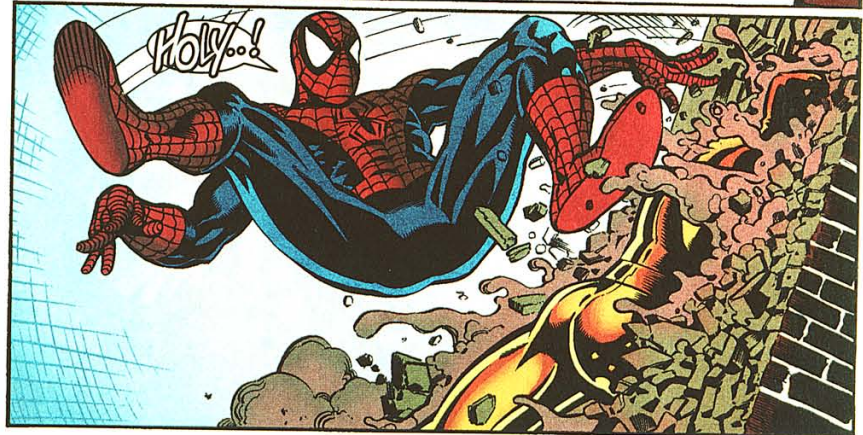
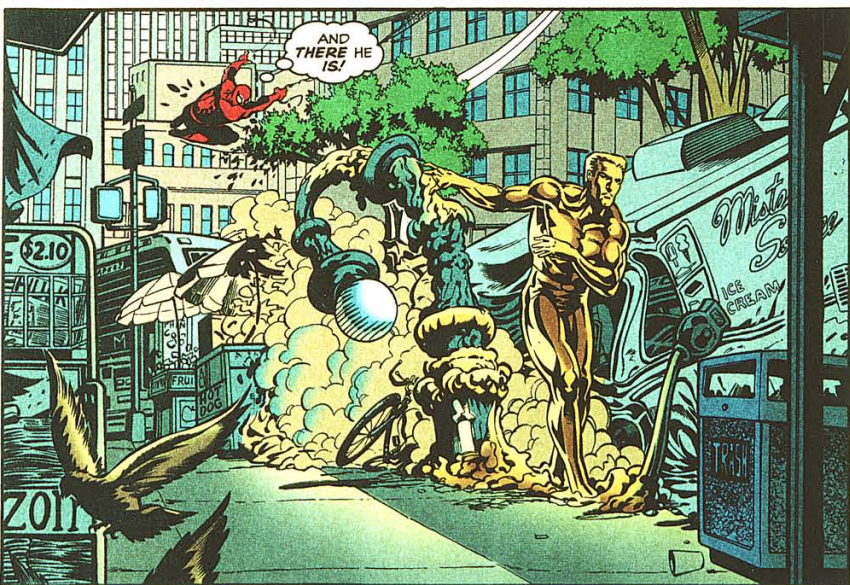
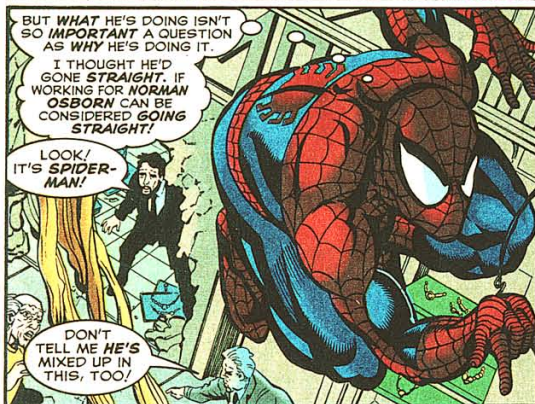
Yet instead of congratulating him, the surrounding crowd accused Spidey of actually kidnapping the girl, and forced the much-maligned hero to flee.

But now, trouble comes from a far more dangerous source as a man Peter Parker thought had put his criminal ways behind him, is in the process of literally burning his way through the heart of Manhattan--and cannot be stopped!



Let's see if the citizenry of New York give the wallcrawler a break this time...

Design by COMICRAFT's John Marasigan





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Get everything but the bus

If you're a winner in the Nabisco Cool Bus Contest



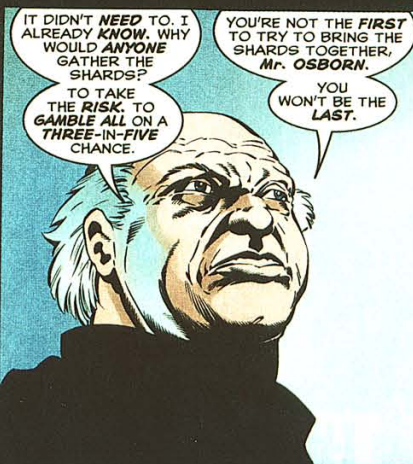
www.nabiscokids.com

If you're a winner, the first stop for the Nabisco Cool Bus will be your school—with Tiger toys and Nabisco snacks to share with you, your friends, and even your teachers (if they behave). Then it's off to your house, where the Cool Bus will drop a busload of slammin' Tiger toys and Nabisco snacks right at your door. To find out how you can win, look for entry details on your favorite Nabisco snacks.

Game subject to full rules. See page 17 for full rules.

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PEBBLES

"WHERE'S THE MISSING ORANGE?" CONTEST RULES

OFFICIAL RULES - NO PURCHASE NECESSARY

1. **HOW TO PLAY:** Carefully rub with your finger the indicated portion of the Official Game Card found inside specially marked packages of Post Fruity Pebbles Cereal to reveal the Official Game Message. If the Official Game Message contains the words, "Grand, First or Second Prize Winner," you are the potential winner of the specified prize, subject to verification. To claim a prize, see Rule #2. If the Official Game Message contains the words "Story, Try Again," see Rule #4 to enter Second Chance Drawing.

2. **CLAIMS:** To claim your prize (pending verification), sign your initials in ink on the back of the Official Game Message. On a plain piece of 3" x 5" paper, legibly print (or type) your complete name and address (including city, state, and zip code), date of birth, date and evening phone numbers and mail together with your potential winning message in a stamped #10 envelope to: Post Fruity Pebbles Claims, P.O. Box 35993, Los Angeles, CA 90035-0993. Grand Prize claims must be mailed via Registered Mail. All prize claims must be received at the Redemption Center by 11/15/99. All prize claims subject to verification. All claims submitted become the sole property of Kraft Foods, Inc. (Sponsor) and none will be returned. Any claim that is tampered with (except the initials of the potential winner), counterfeited, illegible, mutilated, reproduced, contains printing or other errors, obtained where prohibited by law or not obtained through authorized legitimate channels, and will be null and void. Sponsor, affiliates, subsidiaries, and agencies are not responsible for printing, distribution or production errors. No correspondence will be acknowledged.

3. **NO PURCHASE NECESSARY:** To receive one game message without purchase, while supplies last, send a legibly hand-printed, self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: Post Fruity Pebbles Request, P.O. Box 35996, Los Angeles, CA 90035-0996. Requests must be received by 10/13/99. Residents of WA and VT only may omit return postage. Limit one request per envelope mailed separately.

4. **SECOND CHANCE DRAWING:** Any unclaimed Grand Prizes will be awarded in a Second Chance Drawing on or about 11/18/99 from among all eligible Second Chance entries received. To enter, legibly hand-print your complete name, address (including city, state, zip code) and day and evening telephone number on a plain piece of 3" x 5" paper and mail in a hand-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: Post Fruity Pebbles Second Chance Drawing, P.O. Box 35999, Los Angeles, CA 90035-0999. Limit one entry per outer envelope. Entries must be received by 10/13/99. No mechanically reproduced entries permitted. Odds of winning depend on number of unclaimed Grand Prizes and number of second chance entries received. Potential winner(s) will be notified by mail.

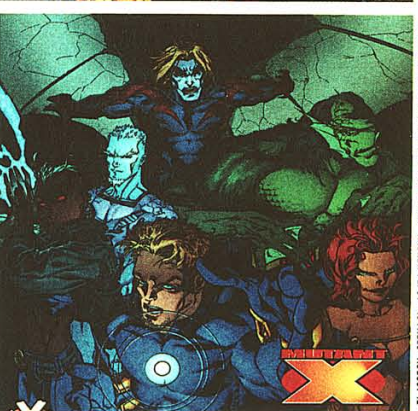
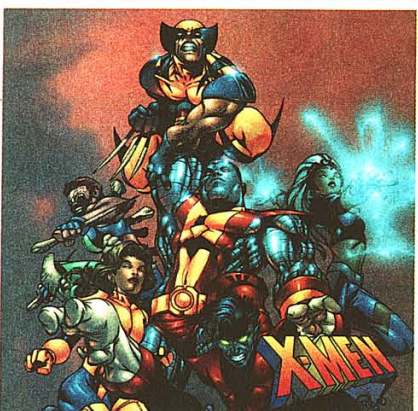
5. **PRIZES/ODDS:** Ten (10) Grand Prizes of one trip for four to Orlando, FL. Trip consists of round-trip coach class air transportation on the air carrier of the winner's choice from the major U.S. commercial airport nearest winner's residence to Orlando, FL; 4 days/3 nights hotel accommodations (2 rooms, double-occupancy); four one-day passes per person to four area amusement theme parks in Orlando, FL; a mid-size rental car for four days; \$1200 spending money. Approximate Retail Value (ARV): \$6,500.00 each. Odds of winning Grand Prize are 1 in 540,000. Prize travel must be completed by one year after the date the prize is awarded. Air travel and hotel accommodations are subject to availability and holiday/backdrop dates. Winner and guests must travel together. All incidental expenses not specified herein including but not limited to meals, gratuities, travel to and from airports are solely winner's responsibility. 1000 First Prizes - one "Wacky Fred" T-shirt (ARV: \$10.00). Odds of winning First Prize are 1 in 5,400. 100 Second Prizes - one "Fred & Barney" Hat (ARV: \$5.00). Odds of winning Second Prize are 1 in 54,000. Approximate retail value of all prizes: \$75,000.

6. **GENERAL RULES:** Game open to U.S. residents age 18 or younger as of 11/15/99. Employees of Kraft Foods, Inc., its parent, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising and promotion agencies, printers of all game materials, persons living in the same household, whether related or not, and the families of each are not eligible. Void where prohibited by law. All federal, state, and local laws and regulations apply. All federal, state, and local taxes, and other charges, if any, are the sole responsibility of the winner. Winners will be notified by mail. If a Grand Prize winner is a minor, the prize will be awarded in the name of parent or legal guardian, and he/she must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Potential winners will be required to sign and return any required Affidavit of Eligibility/Release of Liability within twenty-one days of notification. Winner's guests will also be required to execute a Liability Release. Limit one prize per family/household. Non-compliance within this time or return of any prize notification as undeliverable may result in disqualification and forfeiture of prize. No substitution or transfer of prize permitted, unless prize is generally available at game's end, in which case a prize of equal or greater value will be substituted. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, or misdirected mail. By participating, winner releases Kraft Foods, Inc., its parent, affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising and promotion agencies, the judging organization and their respective directors, officers, employees and agents, from any and all liability with respect to all aspects of the Game and the possession, acceptance, use or misuse of any prizes. By entering the Game, participants agree to abide by and be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of an independent judging organization, whose decisions are final in all matters relating to this game. If due to a printing or production error, more prizes are claimed than intended to be awarded according to Rule 5, prizes will be awarded in a random drawing, per prize category from among all eligible prize claims received. Acceptance of prize offered constitutes permission to use winner's name and/or likeness for advertising/promotional purposes without further compensation, unless prohibited by law.



(continued on facing page)

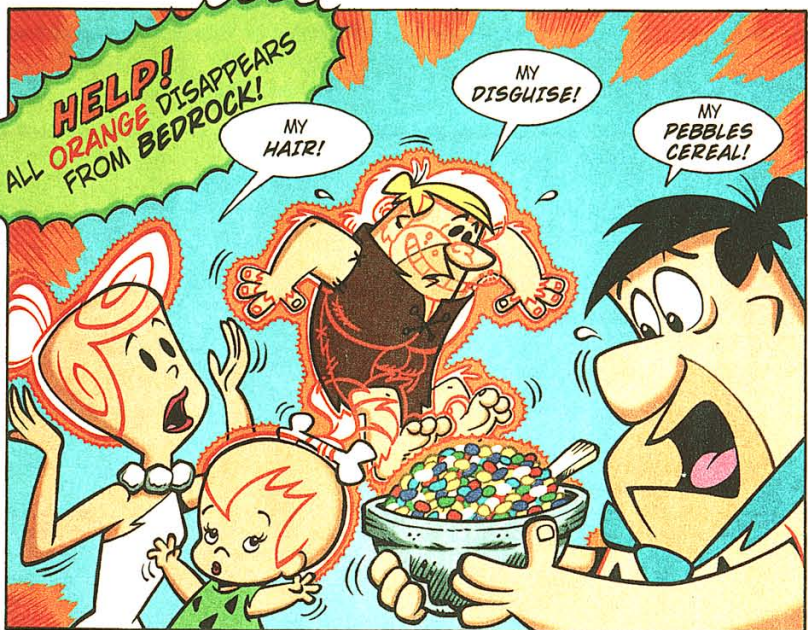
INTRODUCING THE ALL-NEW ALL-DEADLY X-MEN



X-MEN 35TH ANNIVERSARY



FEATURING FOLDED COVERS BY CARLOS PACHECO AND THE RETURN OF NIGHTCRAWLER, COLOSSUS AND SHADOWCAT TO THE TEAM
 DEBUTANT 1-AUG 1990 - STRE SEAGAL - CHRIS BACHALO - TIM TOWNSEND - 48 PAGES - AUGUST 5
 1-AUG 1990 - JOE KELLY - BRANDON PETERSON - ART THIBERT - 48 PAGES - AUGUST 19
 DEBUTANT 1-AUG 1990 - HOWARD MACKIE - TIM RABET - ANDREW PERRY - 48 PAGES - AUGUST 12



FIND THE ORANGE PEBBLES® & YOU COULD WIN A FLORIDA VACATION!
 (WITH WINNING GAME PIECE)

DISCOVER A BOX OF ALL-ORANGE PEBBLES...



...AND YOU COULD BE GOING TO THE BIG ORANGE!!!

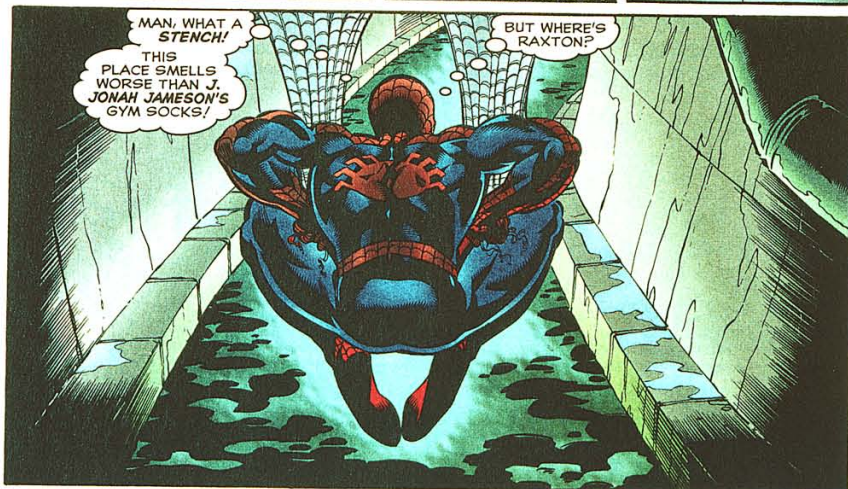
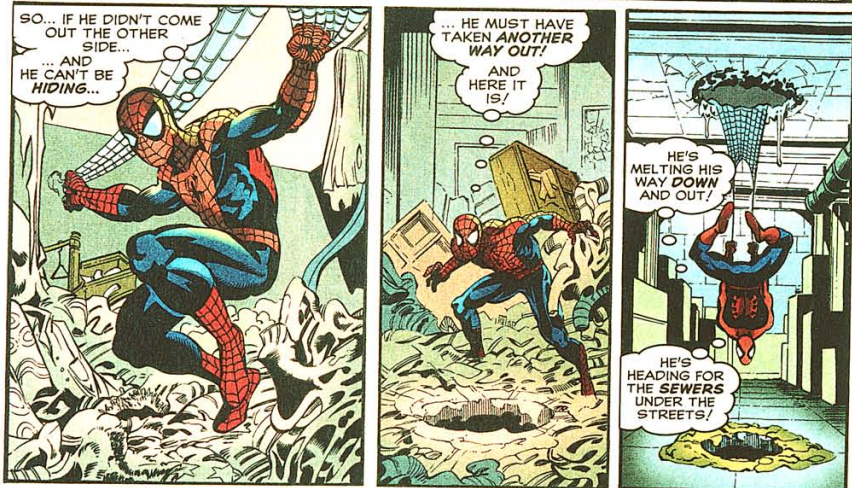
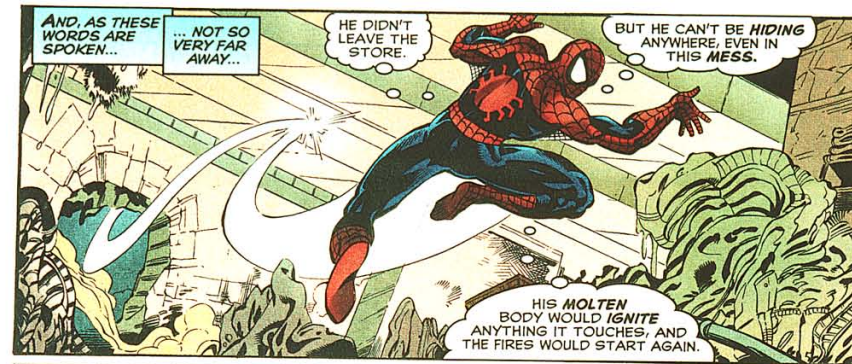


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(continued from facing page)

7. **ARBITRATION:** As a condition of entering this promotion, participant agrees that (a) any and all disputes, claims and causes of action arising out of or from this promotion or any prize awarded shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action, and exclusively by arbitration under the rules of the American Arbitration Association located in Chicago, Illinois; (b) any and all claims, judgments and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including costs associated with entering this promotion but in no event the prize awarded; and (c) participant hereby waives all rights to claim punitive, incidental and consequential damages or any other damages, other than the actual out-of-pocket expenses, and any and all rights to have damages multiplied or increased.

WINNERS LIST: For the names of Grand Prize winners, available after 12/1/99, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to: Post Fruity Pebbles Winner's List, P.O. Box 35997, Los Angeles, CA 90035-0997.



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Weekdays
7am E/P

Morning Scramble

All Dogs Go To Heaven

Animal Crackers

Lek! Stravaganza

Bad Dog

Monster Farm

Walter Melon

the Basement

Weekdays
3pm E/P

The All New

Get In Here!™

Coming August 15th
Check your TV listings for channel number

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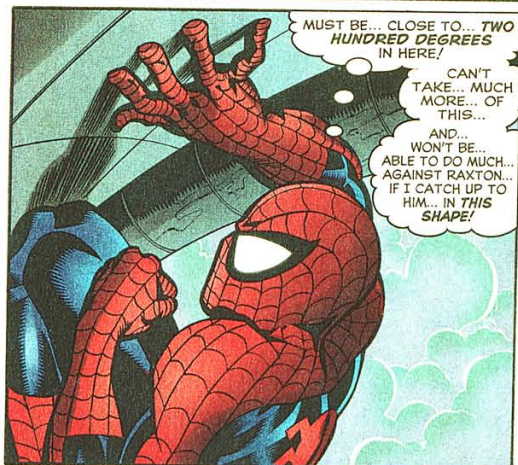
OF COURSE! IF RAXTON IS WALKING THROUGH THIS MUCK, HE'LL BE VAPORIZING IT JUST LIKE HE DID THE WATER FROM THE SPRINKLERS!



ALL I HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW THE STEAM!



Uh-hh!
STARTING TO GET HOTTER'N A SWEDISH SAUNA IN HERE!
THESE TUNNELS CONTAIN ALL THE HEAT FROM THE MOLTEN MAN'S STEAM.



MUST BE... CLOSE TO... TWO HUNDRED DEGREES IN HERE!

CAN'T TAKE... MUCH MORE... OF THIS...
AND... WON'T BE... ABLE TO DO MUCH... AGAINST RAXTON... IF I CATCH UP TO HIM... IN THIS SHAPE!



NO GOOD...

'NOTHER MINUTE OR TWO... AND I'LL PASS OUT FROM THE HEAT!
GOTTA... GET BACK ONTO... THE STREET... SOMEWHERE... COOL!

GET THE CREDIT CARD WITH POWER

RECEIVE 6 MONTHS OF A SPECTACULAR MARVEL COMIC FOR ONLY \$6.00! AFTER THE FIRST USE OF YOUR ACCOUNT

ADVERTISEMENT

With the amazing Marvel MasterCard® credit card, you now have great power and great responsibility! It's the only credit card that gives you heroic purchasing power while enhancing your collection of Marvel merchandise.

After using your No-Annual-Fee Marvel MasterCard for the first time, you'll receive an exclusive, limited-edition Spider-Man lithograph with artist Mark Bagley's signature etched in gold-tone ink! You will also be offered a 6 month trial subscription to a select group of Marvel Comics for just \$6.00. Offer expires June 30, 1998.†

Plus, if you charge \$2,500 in net retail purchases within one year of your account opening date, you can qualify for an exclusive set of three metal Spider-Man cards in a tin collector's case.‡

The Marvel MasterCard comes with a fantastic introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) on cash advance checks and balance transfers, epic Customer service, additional Marvel product discounts, and more.

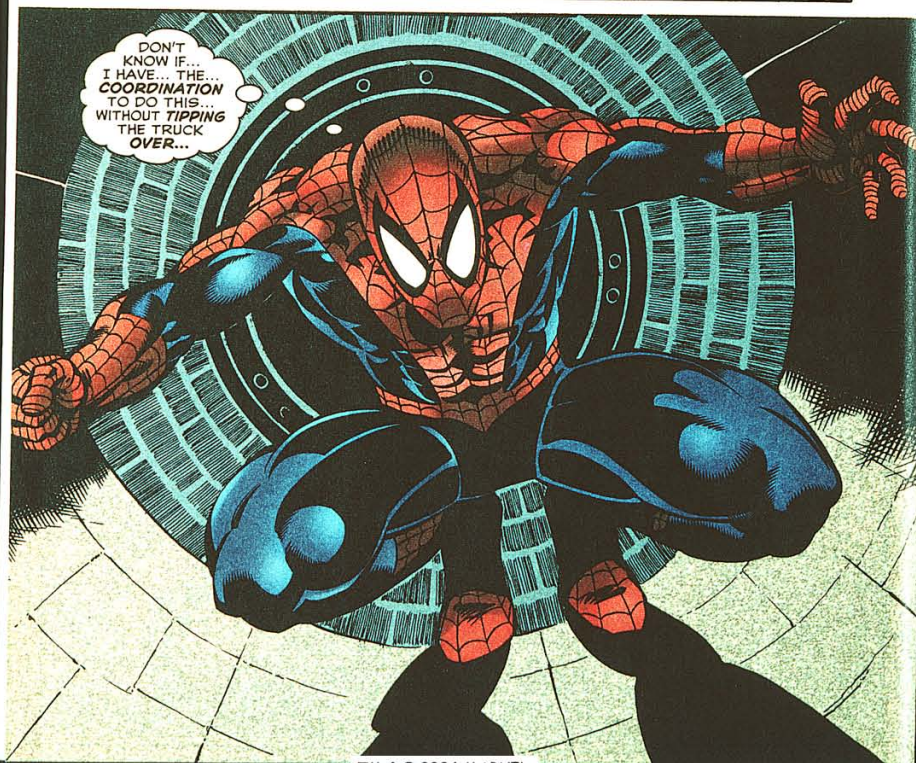
So apply for the only credit card that gives you the spending power of a Super Hero! Call 1-888-SPIDEY-1 today to take advantage of this amazing offer.



Mention priority code G7WC when you call.
(Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.)



†Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. Complete details about each of the offers described here will be sent to all cardholders. Supplies may be limited. These offers are provided by Marvel Entertainment Group. There are costs associated with the use of this credit card. You may contact the issuer and administrator of this program, MBNA America® Bank, to request specific information about the costs by calling 1-800-523-7666 or by writing to P.O. Box 15020, Wilmington, DE 19850. TTY users, please call 1-800-833-6262. MBNA America is a federally registered service mark of MBNA America Bank, N.A. MasterCard is a federally registered service mark of MasterCard International Inc., used pursuant to license. Spider-Man and Marvel © 1998 Marvel Characters, Inc. © 1998 MBNA America Bank, N.A. AD 3-316-97



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CALL YOUR CABLE COMPANY OR SATELLITE PROVIDER TO ORDER! FREE 30 Minutes of ACTION! Watch ⚡ FREE FOR ALL™ on the Prevue Channel, 30 minutes prior to event.

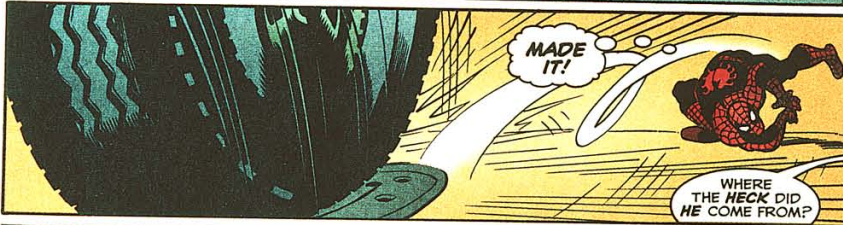
Order ⚡ SummerSlam: Highway To Hell and get a FREE ⚡ Mouse Pad (\$10.00 retail value). Simply send in a copy of your cable or satellite bill indicating the purchase of ⚡ SummerSlam: Highway To Hell to: ⚡ SummerSlam Offer, P.O. Box 5488, Rockville Center, NY 11571-5488. Requests must be received by Friday, October 30, 1998. One request per household while supplies last.

Visit us at wwf.com or on AOL at Keyword: **wwf**

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1998 NABISCO "COOL SCHOOL BUS"™ SWEEPSTAKES

OFFICIAL RULES. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.

1. To enter: You must have your parents' permission to play! From a touch-tone phone only, between 8:00 AM & 11:00 PM, Eastern Time, from 7/1/98 through 10/31/98, call the toll-free number found on specially marked packages of Nabisco cookies and crackers. When calling, you will need to provide the last 5 digits of the UPC # found on the Brand Seal on the specially marked package, and your home phone #. Calls must originate from within the 50 United States, including Wash., D.C. Computer-generated calls not accepted.

No Purchase Necessary—For complete rules, toll-free entry #, list of toys and snacks included in prizes and a qualifying UPC, send self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 1998 "Cool School Bus" Request, P.O. Box 3364, Dept. E, St. Cloud, MN 56397-3364, to be received by 10/15/98. WA & VT residents omit return postage. Limit 1 request per outer mailing envelope. Between 10/1/98 & 10/31/98 ONLY, you may listen to complete rules, obtain toll-free entry #, list of toys and snacks included in prizes, and qualifying UPC by calling 1-888-742-3268. Information line will only be open during time period specified.

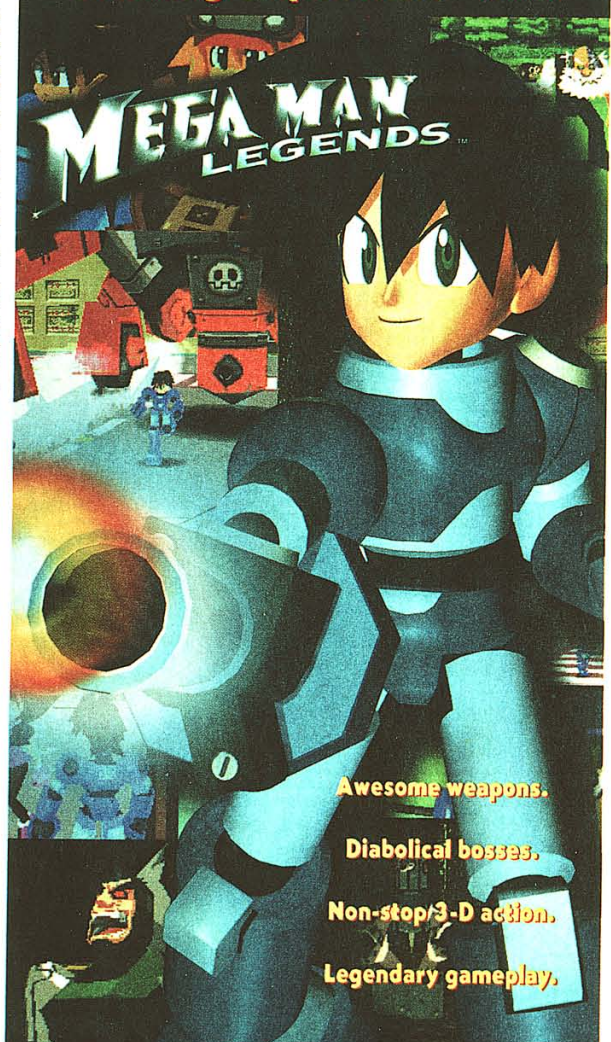
2. Grand Prizes will be awarded at end of program in random drawing from among all eligible, completed calls received in each of the 50 United States and Wash., D.C. Calls from Wash., D.C. will be combined with calls from VA, MD. Please note that calling several times per day will not allow you to be entered more than once per day—only one call per day from any given phone number will be entered into the Grand Prize drawing! Drawing conducted on or about 12/15/98. 1st and 2nd Prize Winners will be selected via random intercepts of calls during program period, will be notified that they have won during call, & will be notified by mail within 6-8 weeks of winning call. Grand Prize Winners will be notified by mail on or about 1/15/99. Random intercepts, drawings & notification are under supervision of Carlson Draddy & Associates, an independent judging organization whose decisions are final.

3. Prizes & approx. retail values: Grand Prize (50-1 awarded in each of the 50 United States)—A "Cool School Bus" full of Tiger Toys & Nabisco snacks™ consisting of a variety of Tiger toys & Nabisco snacks selected by sponsor. Grand Prize includes delivery of Tiger toys & Nabisco snacks to winner's school and house in a School Bus. In Alaska and Hawaii, prizes will be shipped directly to the winner's home and school—no bus delivery available in these areas. Note: The School Bus is not included in the prize (ARV—\$3,000.00 each). 1st Prize (500)—Five Tiger toys & one case of Nabisco snacks, selected by sponsor (ARV—\$125.00 each). 2nd Prize (2,500)—A Tiger toy selected by sponsor & a coupon redeemable for a free Nabisco snack product up to \$3.50 (ARV—\$18.50 each). Coupons must be redeemed by 6/30/99.

4. Open to legal residents of the 50 U.S. states and Wash., D.C. between the ages of 5 and 16 as of 10/31/98. Employees of Tiger Electronics, Ltd., Nabisco, Inc., its affiliates, subsidiaries, agencies, suppliers, phone providers, retailers, immediate families of each & persons living in household of each are not eligible. Void where prohibited. Limit 1 prize per calendar month per phone # of (phone from which call was placed). Limit 1 Grand Prize per household, address or family. Odds of winning Grand Prize depend on total # of eligible calls received in each state. Odds of winning 1st or 2nd Prize depend on total # of eligible calls received. Parents or legal guardians of potential Grand Prize Winners are required to execute an Affidavit of Eligibility & Publicity/Liability Release within 14 days of attempted notification. Non-compliance may result in disqualification & selection of alternate winner. Entry & acceptance of prize grants sponsor right to use winner's name, city, & state of residence and/or likeness for advertising/publicity, without notice or additional compensation, except where prohibited by law. Prizes may be awarded in name of parent/legal guardian. Taxes are winner's responsibility. No transfer or substitution of prizes, except that sponsor reserves right to substitute prizes of equal or greater value. By participating, entrants agree to abide by Official Rules & judges' decisions. All prizes claimed will be awarded. Sponsor & its agencies not responsible for any losses due to lost, late, postage-due, or misdirected mail or entries, incomplete, lost, mislabeled or late information provided via phone or telephone system or electronic equipment failure or data loss. By accepting prize, winners release Sponsor and Promotion Agency, their parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, suppliers, and agents from any and all liability for any loss, harm, damages, cost or expense, including without limitation property damages, personal injury and/or death, arising out of participation in this Sweepstakes or the acceptance, use or misuse of the prize.

5. For list of Grand & 1st Prize winners, available after 2/1/99, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Nabisco Winners, P.O. Box 3528, Dept. D, St. Cloud, MN 56397-3528, to be received by 4/1/99. Sponsor: Nabisco, Inc. Promotion Agency: Carlson Draddy & Associates. ©1998 Nabisco, Inc.

Coming September 9th!



CAPCOM

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"AND TO DO THAT, I'M GOING TO NEED MORE THAN MY SPIDER-ABILITIES!"



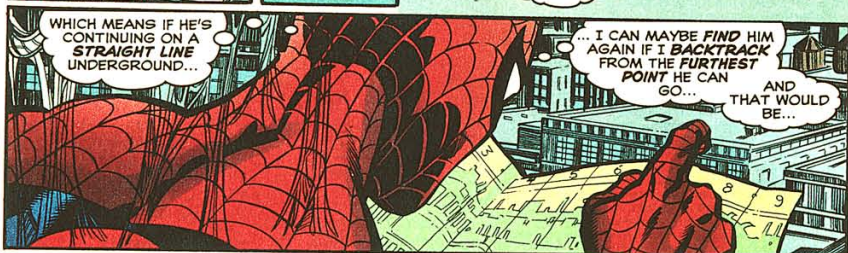
"I'M GONNA NEED A MAP!"



NOW, LET'S SEE...

ACCORDING TO THE FIRST NEWS REPORT I HEARD, RAXTON STARTED HIS LITTLE STROLL HERE...

... AND I PICKED UP HIS TRAIL HERE.



WHICH MEANS IF HE'S CONTINUING ON A STRAIGHT LINE UNDERGROUND...

... I CAN MAYBE FIND HIM AGAIN IF I BACKTRACK FROM THE FURTHEST POINT HE CAN GO... AND THAT WOULD BE...



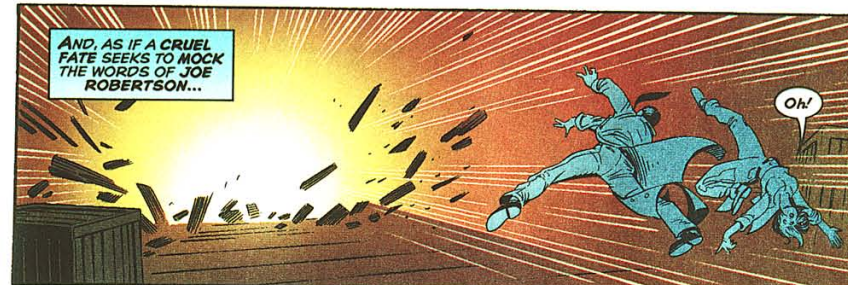
"... THERE!"

HURRY! OH, DO HURRY! WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH TIME ON THIS BOAT.

WE HAD NO CHOICE. WE HAD TO GET OUT OF FRANCE...
... BUT ALL THE AIRPORTS WERE BEING WATCHED.



I'M NOT EVEN CONVINCED THIS OLD TRAMP STEAMER WAS ABLE TO GET US OUT OF COLOGNE WITHOUT SOMEONE KNOWING WE WERE ABOARD!

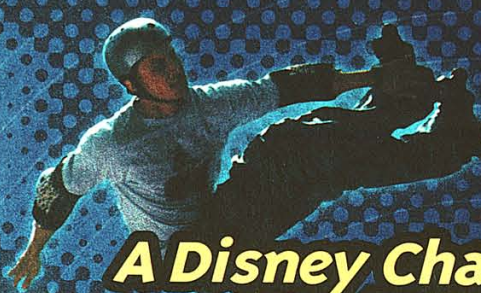


AND, AS IF A CRUEL FATE SEEKS TO MOCK THE WORDS OF JOE ROBERTSON...

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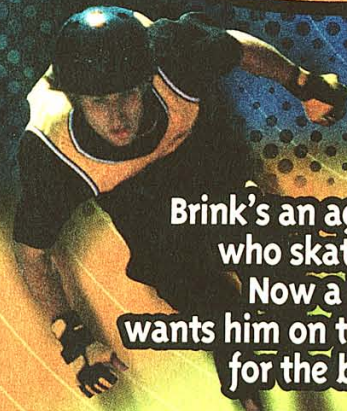


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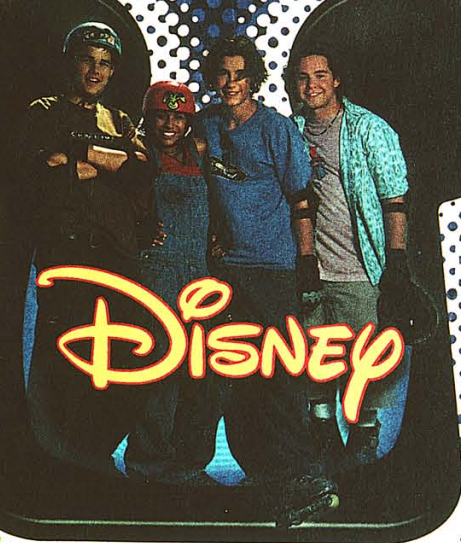
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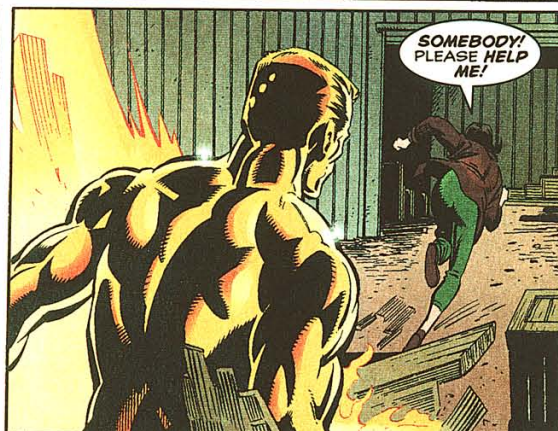


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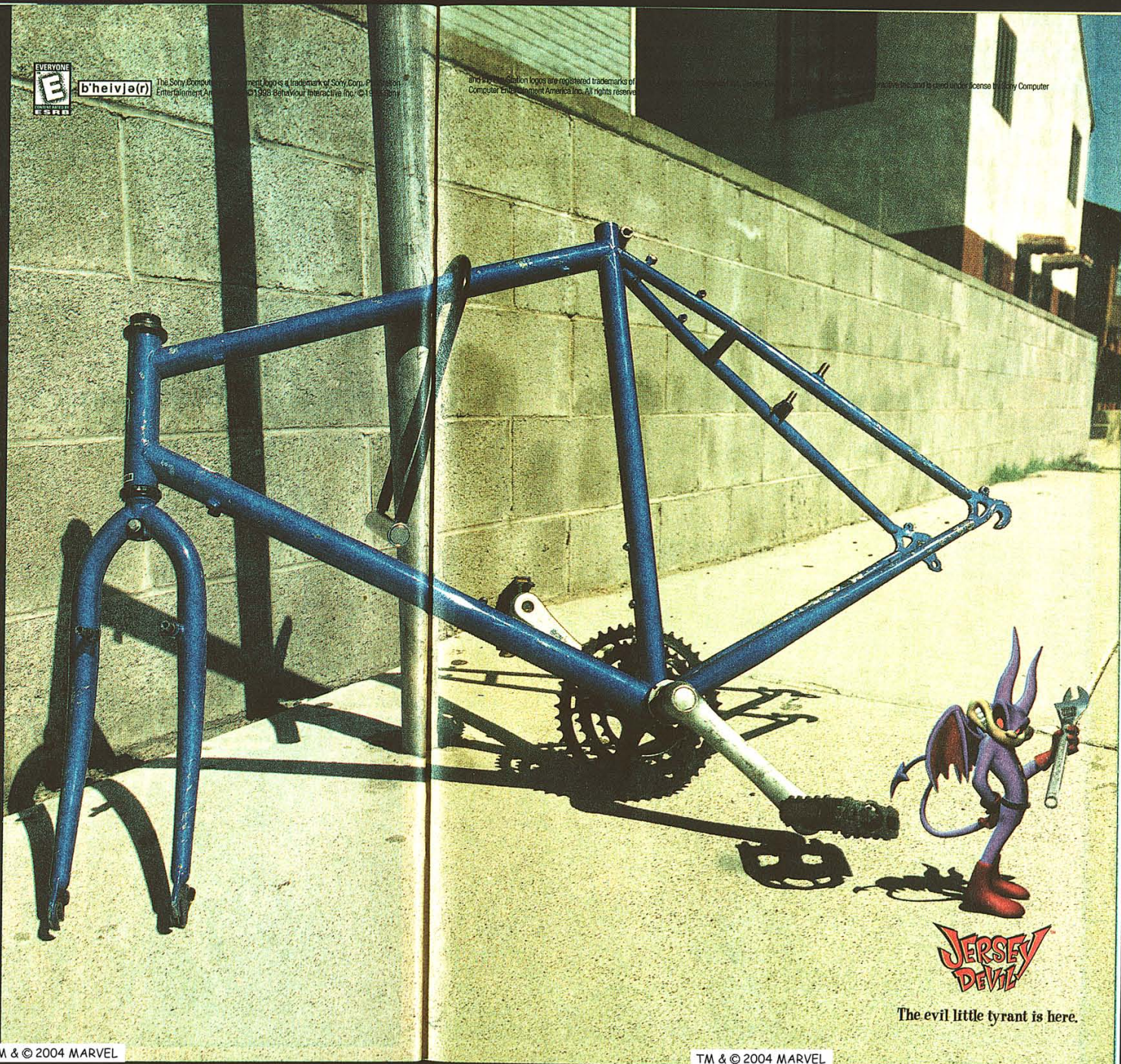
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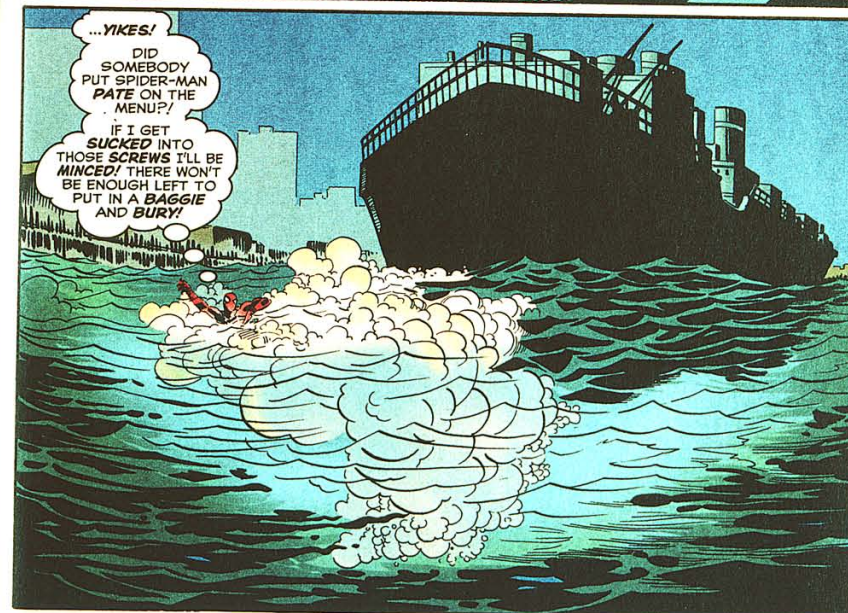
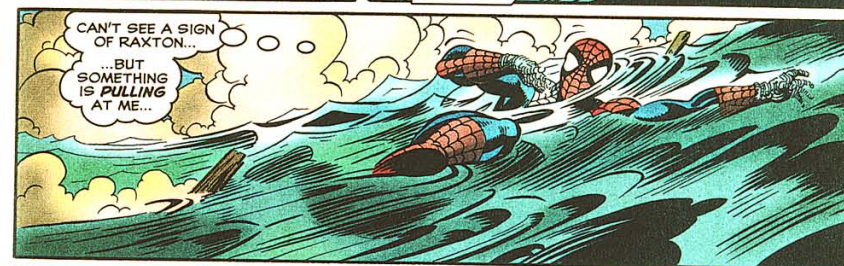
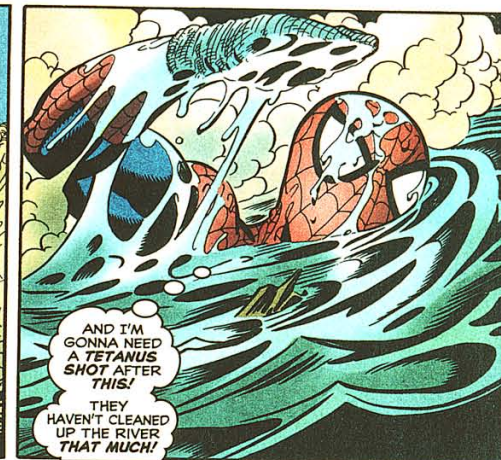
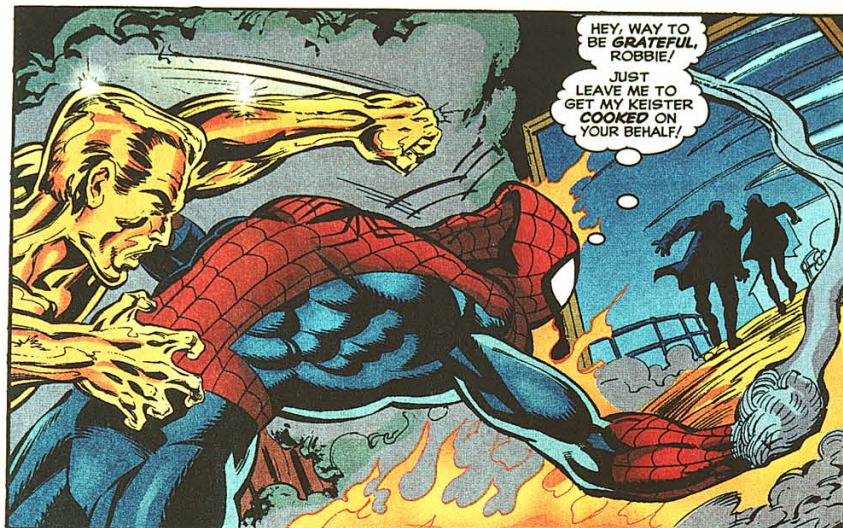
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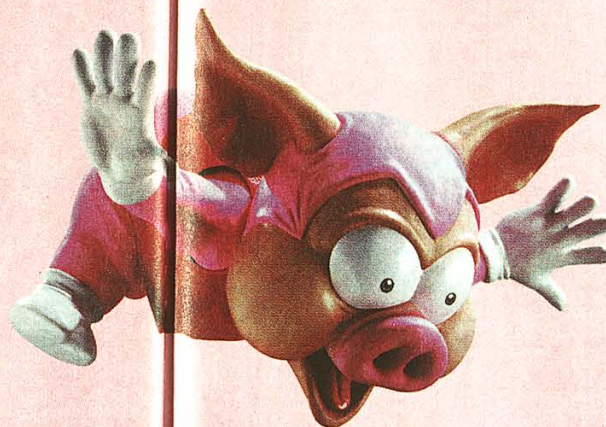
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A-NEXT

Introducing the next wave of AVENGERS! But can these future warriors really live up to the legacy of Earth's Mightiest Heroes? By TOM DeFALCO and RON FRENZ!

CAPTAIN AMERICA

What are the RED SKULL, KANG, and U.S. AGENT up to? Find out in part two of 'American Nightmare'! By MARK WAID and ANDY KUBERT!

EXCALIBUR

48-page final issue! At last - the wedding of MEGGAN and CAPTAIN BRITAIN! Wait till you see all the uninvited guests who show up! By BEN RAAB and TREVOR SCOTT!

HEROES FOR HIRE

QUICKSILVER joins the HEROES FOR HIRE in an assault on MOUNT WUNDAGORE, but at any moment, the HH could revert to subhuman beast! By JOHN OSTRANDER and PASQUAL FERRY!

INCREDIBLE HULK

This unpredictable ish is full of surprises! All we can reveal is that BRUCE BANNER is in trouble, and the SUPER-ADAPT-OID isn't helping any! By JOE CASEY and JAVIER PULIDO!

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN

J. JONAH JAMESON decides to settle matters with NORMAN OSBORN, once and for all! And SPIDEY's got his hands full with MADAME WEB! By HOWARD MACKIE and JOHN ROMITA JR.!

MARVEL ANNUAL '98: PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN/ELEKTRA

The wall-crawler and the lethal lady team up to track down the mob's deadliest hitman, a bio-engineered killer called THE SILENCER! By HOWARD MACKIE, JOHN MORELLI and JOYCE CHIN!

STRANGE TALES

Twice the horror! Twice the chills! MANTHUS tackles the demonic MISTER TERMINUS, while WEREWOLF BY NIGHT must face a horde of vampires! By J.M. DEMATTEIS, PAUL JENKINS, LIAM SHARR, LEONARDO MANICO, and more!

THUNDERBOLTS

The THUNDERBOLTS have faced some dangerous characters before, but this ish features a villain with a neat twist - he was created by one of our frantic fans! By KURT BUSIEK and MARK BAGLEY!

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN: STRANGE ENCOUNTER

At last! The never-before-told story of the first meeting between SPIDEY and that Marvelous magician, DOCTOR STRANGE! By KURT BUSIEK, ROGER STERN, and NEIL VOKES!

WHAT IF?

One of the most debated issues ever! What if TONY STARK had become the Master of the Mystic Arts, instead of DOCTOR STRANGE? By CHRIS DUFFY and GREG SCHIGIEL!

X-MAN

Innocent people are turning up dead, and all the evidence points to a certain teenage mutant telepath! By TERRY KAVANAGH, ROGER CRUZ and BUD LAROSA!

X-MEN: THE MANGA

The GENOSHA saga comes to an end as GAMBIT, JUBILEE, and STORM stage a daring escape that reunites them with the X-MEN! By HIROFUMI ICHIKAWA and YORIYA OHASHI!

X-MEN

The 35th anniversary celebration continues, as KITTY PRYDE, COLOSSUS and NIGHTCRAWLER return to the fold, just in time to investigate the mystery of THE FOUNDER! By JOE KELLY and BRANDON PETERSON!

ITEM! In 1963, the God of Mischief, LOKI, caused the Earth's Mightiest Heroes to come together as the AVENGERS! Now, 35 years later, history is repeating itself in the pages of A-NEXT #1, on sale next week! A-NEXT is the second title from our new MC 2 Universe, which depicts the adventures of our heroes in the not-too-distant future! Our story begins with KEVIN MASTERSON, the son of the deceased super hero, THUNDERSTRIKE, returning to New York to learn more about his father's all-too-brief stint as a hero. When Kevin enters Avengers Mansion, he unleashes a chain of events that causes the founding of a new generation of the legendary super-team! Who are the all-new Thunderstrike and STINGER? Who are MAINFRAME and J-2? What does the future hold for JUBILEE, SPEEDBALL, and JOLT? The answers can all be found in this fantastic, futuristic fable by TOM DeFALCO, RON FRENZ and BRETT BREEDING! Pick up A-NEXT #1, and see if LOKI lets this new group of Avengers survive till their second issue!

ITEM! Everyone gets a little nervous about a visit to the doctor. So imagine what it must be like the first time you visit DOCTOR STRANGE, the Master of the Mystic Arts! UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN: STRANGE ENCOUNTER, is a 48-page one-shot revealing the never-before-told story of our amazing arachnid's first-ever appointment with the Doctor! This special will appear like magic in seven short days, compliments of those lords of illusion, KURT BUSIEK, ROGER STERN, NEIL VOKES, and JAY GELDHOF! As for the plot, it's a doozy! Something is loose in Manhattan, and it's abducting innocent people! The teenage Spidey investigates, but he's going to come up against something he's never faced before: the arcane art of black magic! Fortunately for ol' Web-Head, Doc Strange makes house calls!

ITEM! Just a quick reminder that THUNDERBOLTS #19, hitting stores like lightning next week, features the long-awaited debut of the 'Create A Villain' contest from Wizard magazine! With public sentiment turning against them, and without the positive presence of JOLT, will the T-BOLTS save a town besieged by this powerful new foe? KURT BUSIEK, MARK BAGLEY, and SCOTT HANNA are the creative crew bringing you all the thunder!

ITEM! You are cordially invited to attend the wedding of CAPTAIN BRITAIN and MEGGAN on August 19th, in the double-sized EXCALIBUR #125! Since this is a mutant super-hero wedding, you just know there will be plenty of punches thrown with handfuls of rice! Among the party-crashers in this historic final issue are ARCHANGEL, PSYLOCKE, MIMIC, MICROMAX, the CRAZY GANG, the TECHNET, and many more! Writer BEN RAAB and artists TREVOR SCOTT and SCOTT HANNA are the wedding planners in charge of organizing the fisticuffs and festivities! As a special bonus, the cover is provided by ALAN DAVIS, the super-talented artist who helped launch EXCALIBUR all those years ago! While the wedding marks a new beginning for CAPTAIN BRITAIN and MEGGAN, it also marks a sad ending - you'll be stunned by the fateful decision made by KITTY PRYDE, NIGHTCRAWLER, and COLOSSUS!

ITEM! NATE GREY hasn't been the same since he was hit by the electro-magnetic pulse that blasted out of X-MEN #771! Now, in X-MAN #43, it looks like Nate may actually be a murderer! Could he really be bumping off innocent people in his sleep? That's the \$64,000 question, as Nate searches for answers he may not want to find! Writer TERRY KAVANAGH dreamed up this intriguing story, with ROGER CRUZ and BUD LAROSA delivering an art job that's sure to open your eyes! So sleepwalk down to your comic shop and pick up this issue! It's got a shock ending that will give you nightmares for a month!

STAN'S SOAPBOX!

Hi, Heroes! I know how tough it must be to keep waiting for each new Soapbox, but I'm proud of you for bravely hanging in there until this memorable moment! To reward your patience, I'll generously explain our No-Prize procedure once more. Since almost all your letters are provocative and prize-worthy, the only way I can fairly pick the winners is to blindfold myself, reach into our mighty Marvel mixing bowl and pluck out the ones I grab first. So let's see who the fickle finger of fate has pointed to this ish...

All the way from Melbourne, Australia, Rodney Hamilton wants to know:

"Is the stunning syntax of the boisterous baby blue Beast modeled on your own rather unique eloquent styling and masterful molding of the English language?"

Duh, gee - I dunno, Rod. If you think dat's the way I write, then I guess hey, mebbe ya knows what yer talkin' about - or somethin'. But to answer yer question: Yeah!

Wow, here's an easy one from Greg Clark of Little Rock, AR:

"On many of my comics it says 'direct edition.' What does that mean?"

That refers to comics that are sold only in comic book stores and nowhere else.

Some people, like Brad Sawyer of Sapulpa, OK, seem interested in my bedroom habits:

"With all the movies and cartoons you work on and the Soapbox questions to answer plus the occasional comicbook to write, do you ever sleep?"

Sure, Brad, I'd get tons of sleep - if that was all I did. But don't forget the Spider-Man newspaper strip, plus the college lectures and conventions! And how about meticulously stuffing all those invisible No-Prizes into their special envelopes? But I do find time to doze off - when I read our competitors' mags! (Only kiddin', gang!)

Jeff Charpentier of Eau Claire, WI gets kinda personal with this one:

"Who are some of your favorite non-comic book authors?"

Strangely enough, my favorites today are the same ones who were my favorites years ago - H.G. Wells, Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and my good friend and favorite contemporary author, Howlin' Harlan Ellison!

Lots of fans ask the same question as Robert Hobbs of Norwalk, IA:

"Will there ever be another Marvel fan club like FOOB in the 1970's?"

You must be a mind reader, Bob. We're actually planning one now! We'll announce it officially as soon as we can dream up a sketchy name!

Just enough room left to give you our world-famous e-mail address: stan@stan.com and our regular mailing address: Stan's Soapbox, c/o BULLPEN BULLETINS, Marvel, 387 Park Ave South, New York, NY 10016. But don't let that info fall into enemy hands!

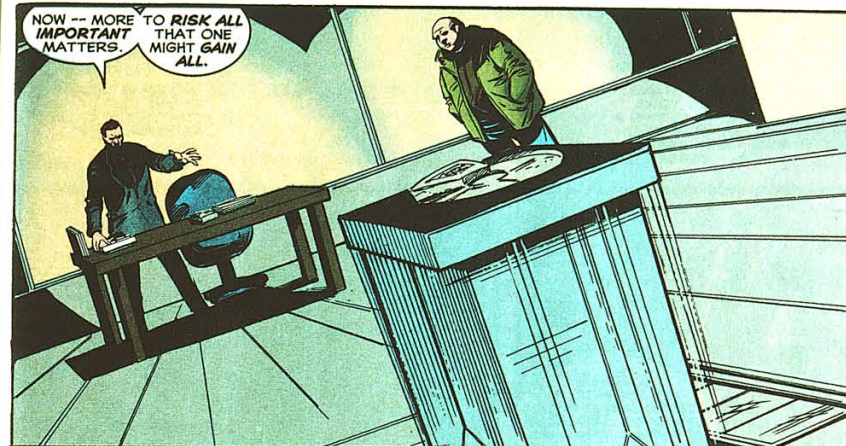
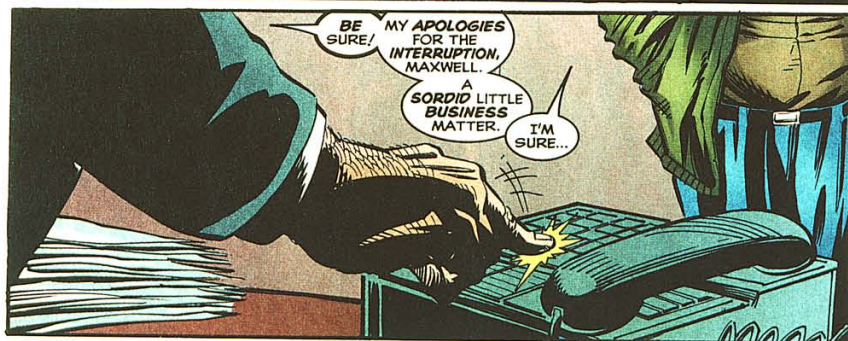
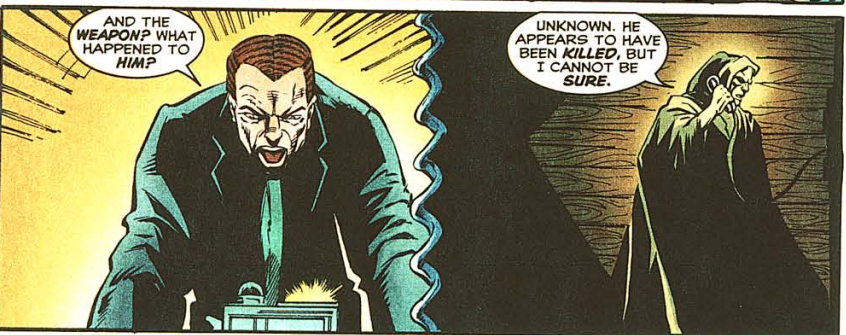
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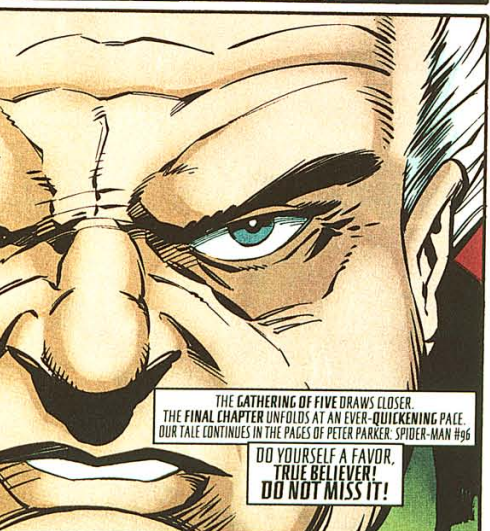
Stan Lee

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THE SPIDER'S WEB

Dear Spider's Web (or should it be Ricochet Replies, or something like that for a while?).

Peter has certainly figured out a way to go on in spite of Norman Osborn. I'm impressed. Even if, as the ad hints, he'll be back to Spider-Man in a couple of months, these get-ups are neat.

And the return of the package which may or may not be little May. I hope this subplot gets tied up along with the rest of "Identity Crisis," because my chief reaction to it is some mild curiosity about how long you can drag out everyone involved never saying anything that would tell us whether it is May or not. At this point, whatever they say is going to look contrived because we know you're hiding something, and it feels like you are never going to resolve it, so there's very little suspense about how you will.

I also have a request about the Thunderbolts. Mary Jane mentioned in this issue that they had been exposed, but that's about all the reaction we've seen. Considering that Peter teamed up with them and concluded they were all right, and considering that Peter's old foe the Beetle was one of them—and the one who gave Peter the evidence to clear himself from that murder accusation—I would think that Peter would have had a reaction to the news, even with everything else on his plate. After all, Abe's reaction to giving him that evidence was to spend a long time wondering why he had done it.

On the other hand, looking back on the storylines these last two months, I'm not sure you could have fit it in. Maybe when the Thunderbolts return to Earth, he could remember his reaction, or have some way of telling us.

Mary Catelli
(Address withheld by request)

You hit the nail right on the head, Mary! With all the excitement going on here at Spider Central, we never got around to having Peter comment on the Thunderbolts "unmasking." Sure, we love to include as much of that cross-continuity stuff as possible, but when you're in the midst of such exciting fare as "SpiderHunt" and "Identity Crisis," you don't always get the opportunity to fit in everything you'd like. Sorry!

As for the "package"...hmm. Interesting you should bring it up. Any issue now, you should be finding out exactly what that "package" consists of, and, suffice it to say, despite your cynicism, we're bound to knock your socks off with this one!

Dear Spider's Web,
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #434, or should I say AMAZING RICOCHET #1, was great! I was glad to see Alison

Mongrain again, and I'm glad she survived the yacht explosion! For some weird reason, I really think she's a cool supporting character!

I was also glad to see the Black Tarantula storyline finally taking off! I feel you were too slow in bringing it along. But I have to admit you have me stumped as to who he is! Is he someone we've seen before?

The cover to ASM #434 was great! Who drew it? I also liked the rooftop artwork on page 21. It is important to show Spider-Man as kind of a loner, alone on the tops of buildings, looking down at the troubles of the city. I hope to see more.

Speaking of Tarantulas, where is the original Tarantula; he was a favorite villain of mine and a lot of other Spidey fans too. I would say! Bring back old pointy toes!

Well, until Delilah smiles, Make Mine Marvel and Spider-Man!

Brendan Walsh
1501 Hood
Chicago, IL 60660

Let's see if we have this straight, Brendan. You think that Alison Mongrain is...cool? This from a guy whose favorite character is Man-Wolf. To each his own.

Dear Spider's Web,

Re: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #434 Ricochet seems like an interesting character. His costume looks like he should be bouncing around because a silver and blue blur looks really cool. I have only one complaint about the costume: Peter's hair. Is it a silver colored wig, or does Peter use wash-out dye? Since I didn't see his hair fall off on page 21, I guess it's dye. I think it would be funny to see Peter fighting as Ricochet on one page and on the next have him walking into the Daily Bugle with silver hair! The only problem is, someone would probably make the connection.

Why would Peter, as Ricochet, strike up a deal with Delilah? I know he wants a piece of the Black Tarantula, but teaming up with Delilah is a bad choice. Speaking of our mystery villain, what did he really come to New York for? This issue hinted that he was after one of these three women: Marina, Shantall and Mary Jane.

Wait a minute. I just thought of something. Around ASM #419, Ben Urich was trying to dig up facts about the Black Tarantula. One of his contacts said something happened recently to his wife and child and now he wanted to expand to New York from South America. A few issues later, a woman named Marina is introduced. None of her past was revealed until ish #434. She said she had a son named Fabian and she tended to be secretive about him. Nothing was said about the boy's father! My answer to all this is:

Marina is married to the Black Tarantula and Fabian is his son! That would explain why Chesbro is following MJ and Marina. MJ is Marina's best friend and she knows what Marina does and where she goes and the Black Tarantula needs all this information to get her (or at least his son) back. On top of all this, Marina and Fabian sound like South American names. If I'm right, send my No-Prize in the mail.

What did Osborn give to Alison Mongrain? At first I thought it was little May Parker who had presumably died at birth, but now I'm not so sure. I would like to see this plot resolved in the next two issues. I'm getting rather sick of this mystery.

Josh Savitski
103 Eddy Street
Throop, PA 18447

Wow, another letter writer clamoring for the end to the Alison Mongrain/package mystery. Good thing we're wrapping that one up in this very storyline, else we'd be in deep!

Good guessing on the connection between the Black Tarantula and Marina, Josh! As you know by now, you were absolutely correct! However, we cannot send you a No-Prize. That particular distinction, at least as far as this office goes, may be earned only by spotting an error in a Marvel comic and explaining why that might not actually be an error.

Example: Ralf is the worst editor at Marvel and should never have been hired. His entire career is one big mistake on Marvel's part.

Explanation: This is not really a mistake because Ralf was never hired on his own merits, Marvel took pity on him for having been fired seven times by the moving company that his own family owns and decided to give this poor slob a home, despite whatever damage he could cause. Therefore, Marvel knew they were hiring the worst editor in the world, and it wasn't a mistake!

NEXT ISSUE:
T HE'S BAAAAACK! THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS AND GIRLS, NORMAN -- ONCE AGAIN SUITS UP AS THE GREEN GOBLIN! NOW, THAT THE GATHERING OF FIVE HAS BEEN COMPLETED, NOTHING CAN STAND IN HIS WAY! PLUS, PETER RECEIVES SOME SHOCKING NEWS FROM ALISON MONGRAIN! THIS IS IT, FRIENDS! JOHN BYRNE WRITES AND SUPPLIES THE COVER TO THIS SOON-TO-BE-A-CLASSIC, RAFAEL KAYANAN DRAWS IT, BLUD LAROSA INKS IT, AND RALF FINALLY FIRES THE LETTER COLUMN WRITER FOR STEPPING OVER THE LINE IN MAKING FUN OF HIM ONCE TOO OFTEN!

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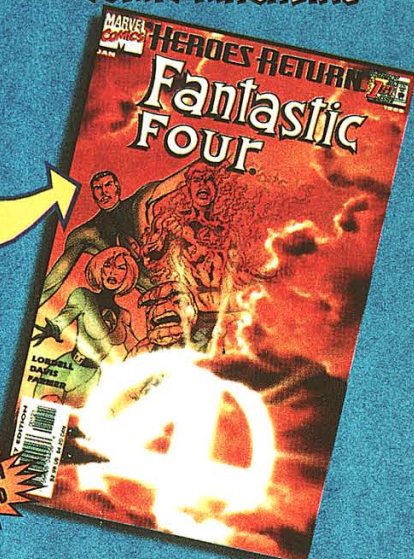
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- ☐ MAN X-Man
- ☐ MEN X-Men

Marvel Heroes

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- ☐ DDV Daredevil
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Scratch off the playing area on Winning Symbols are depicted as follows: Grand Prize game piece reveals a music note. Fourth Prize game piece reveals a feather. Second Prize game piece reveals a honeycomb. Third Prize game piece reveals a music note. Fourth Prize game piece reveals a feather. If your game piece indicates that you are a winner, legibly print your name, address, daytime phone number on a 3"x5" card and sign your name in ballpoint pen on the game piece. GRAND, FIRST, SECOND, and THIRD PRIZE WINNERS, mail potentially winning game piece and 3"x5" card to: "Find the Magic Puzzle Piece" Game Piece Request, P.O. Box 3361, Maple Plain, MN 55559-3361. Grand Prize game piece should be mailed to: "Find the Magic Puzzle Piece" Game Piece Request, P.O. Box 3361, Maple Plain, MN 55559-3361. Make a copy of game piece for your records. Prize claims must be received no later than March 2, 1999, and on behalf of the minor. 3. Verification. 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In the event of a printing or other error that results in more than one prize claim received in such category, any person who is rejected if not obtained in accordance with the Official Rules and through authorized legitimate channels, or if any part is determined by Game Marketing Group, an independent judging organization, whose decisions are final and binding in all matters relating to this game. 4. Eligibility. Open only to legal U.S. residents, excluding employees of Keebler Company, Nintendo of America Inc., any of their affiliate companies, subsidiaries, distributors, agents, retailers, advertising and promotional agencies, suppliers, Game Marketing Group, and of Winning. Grand (1) Nintendo® 64 Entertainment Center, includes: Nintendo® 64 System, 32" Wide Screen TV, Surround Sound Receiver and Surround Sound Speakers and one Banjo-Kazooie™ System. ARV \$54.95 each. Odds: 1:190,000. First (10) Nintendo® 64 System with one Banjo-Kazooie™ Game Pak. ARV \$299.99 each. 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